Creating shared and flexible learning spaces: A continuum for rethinking space

Space matters, but not having the money to invest in learning space design shouldn't stop you from launching team-based models. This continuum is a tool to support decision-making for a phased approach for transforming learning spaces.

School-level element:
Flexible spaces
The core team and students share multiple learning spaces within one room or multiple rooms, according to learning task and need, and move across these spaces in varied group sizes throughout the school day.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Leverage existing spaces that are physically close to one another.	Invest in lower-cost furniture, equipment and/or minor construction	Invest in higher-cost furniture, equipment and/or major construction	Invest in completely redesigned space or new construction

Why do we need to rethink space?
We believe there is a continuum on which each team-based learning environment sits. Where it sits is usually a function of the level of investment the school or school system can make in shifting learning spaces in ways that have a positive impact on educators and students. Any level of investment signals to a community that teaching and learning will be different. While a team could be at any point along the continuum, for the sake of quick classification, we think in terms of the four levels above.

Review the following indicators and models to determine where you may fall on the continuum for levels 1–3. If you have the resources for a full redesign or build, then we recommend beginning with a future vision of learning.

Level 1: Leverage existing spaces that are physically close to one another	
Rethinking current physical spaces and resources	• Identifying adjacent classrooms that can be allocated to a team • Identifying and outfitting a space where the whole team can be together • Arranging furniture and resources in different rooms to <u>meet learning and curriculum needs</u> • Strategically allocating equipment to shared spaces (e.g., 1 classroom library not 4) • Begin sourcing furniture, like couches and rugs, from independent and local resources (eg.estate sales or constructed community partners)
Creating visible symbols of your commitment	• Putting all educators names on all rooms (or no names on no rooms) • Making systems and procedures visible to facilitate student / educator movement in the space • Ensuring students names, work and representation are displayed across all learning spaces
Models	• <u>Whittier Elementary School</u> • <u>Sousa Elementary School</u> • <u>Westwood High School</u>

Levels 2–3: Invest in lower and higher-cost furniture, equipment or construction	
Classroom resources	• Choosing tables at different sizes, signaling different learning experiences and engagement • Planning for zones of learning with different types of resources and furniture, including outdoor spaces
Construction	• Using windows and cut-throughs on shared walls • Integrating moveable walls to break up bigger spaces or removing walls • Adding windows, garage and doors
Models	• <u>Stevenson Elementary School (L2)</u> • <u>Kyrene de las Manitas (L3)</u>